

31st Fighter Wing: The U.S. Air Force's fighter wing south of the Alps

THE VIGILEER

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Aviano Air Base, Italy

Fly Bys

WAPS testing

Monday is a late-reporting day for most Airmen, but people who are promotion testing must report to the testing location at their appointed time. For more information, call Ext. 7160.

Writing contest

The 31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs office is holding a writing contest for the best Super Bowl recap article.

The winner will have their article published in the Feb. 9 issue of the Vigileer and will win a JVC Home Theater System donated by the Aviano Base Exchange and the Army Air Force Exchange Service.

Submissions may be up to a page and a half double-spaced and must be sent to vigileer@aviano.af.mil by 5 p.m. Monday.

HAWC

On Tuesday, the Health and Wellness Center hosts a Healthy Living class at 8 a.m., a Tobacco Cessation class at noon and 4:30 p.m., and a Body Composition Improvement class at 1 p.m.

For more information on these classes or to schedule an appointment, call Ext. 4573.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Lilianna Moreno

Fighting decay

Senior Airman Sarai Gapetz, 31st Dental Squadron dental technician, left, assists Capt. Corbet Ellison, 31st DS pediatric dentist, during dental rehabilitation surgery. February is National Children's Dental Health Month and throughout the month, the dental squadron will teach Aviano school students about the importance of proper dental hygiene.

Aviano kicks off tax season

*Courtesy 31st Fighter Wing
Legal Office*

Tax season is underway and W-2s are now available on the myPay Web site. Of interest to some Airmen is their possible eligibility for a tax filing extension.

"While stationed overseas, people can qualify for a 60-day extension on filing taxes, but they must apply for the extension," said Capt. Tyson Kindness, 31st Fighter Wing as-

sistant staff judge advocate. "However, the extension is not granted if you owe. If you owe, it is still due by April 15."

Those who are currently in a combat zone also qualify for a tax extension.

"People in a combat zone automatically get a 180-day extension on filing and paying," Captain Kindness said. "The extension starts from the day you return. When you file, you

See taxes, Page 7

Command board: Updated wing command chief photos are available at the Public Affairs office. Call Ext. 7555 for details.

*World's Finest
DUI/MMVA counter*

6 days ...

Since Aviano's last DUI

54 ...

Major Motor Vehicle Accidents



New medal

Airmen who have experienced combat action on the ground and in the air may be eligible for a new Air Force combat medal.

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Bronze star

For his actions downrange, a staff sergeant from the 31st CES explosive ordnance disposal flight was awarded the bronze star.

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Deadline info: The deadline for submitting information is close of business Thursday one week prior to publication. Send all information by e-mail to the Vigileer at vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Faxed articles will not be accepted by the staff. The public affairs office is located in Bldg. 1360, Rm. 19. The Vigileer staff can be reached at Ext. 7344.

Editorials: We want to hear from you. Flex your writing talents and share your thoughts with the community. Commentaries must be 500 to 700 words. Topics must be applicable to the Air Force, Aviano and appeal to the general public.

World's Finest: Messages can be submitted for appreciation, retirements, awards, good service, promotions and graduations.

31st Fighter Wing

Commander's Corner

By Brig. Gen. Robert Yates
31st Fighter Wing commander

Good day, World's Finest! I hope this day finds you all well, safe and happy. Today's column is devoted to 'what's going on around the ranch.' While we're very busy preparing for the 'elephant in the room' – the upcoming TACEVAL – we have a number of fun and enlightening events planned this month for the enjoyment of all. A number of the events are covered later on in this edition of the Vigileer; there are a few that I'd like to bring to your attention myself.

First, I'd like to address the younger crowd – Airmen Basic, Airmen, Airmen First Class, Senior Airmen. Chief Lane and I have led a group of many around the base who've worked very hard to develop activities attractive to our younger Airmen in the ranks E-1 thru E-4. For instance, the 31st Services Squadron has worked hard to make this weekend's Super Bowl Party at the La Bella Vista Club (**LBVC**), a "Dorm Dweller's Super Bowl Party (**DDSBP**)."

Why DDSBP? Because DDs are my number one priority, and LBVC is your Club. The event begins at 2100 hours, runs until the end of the game, it's free or cheap, and we'll give you a ride.

Specifically, **DDSBP** is free for club members and just \$5 for E-1 thru E-4 non-members/\$10 for all others. Services will run a shuttle from Area Two to **LBVC** and back so you don't have to drive.

If you're a club member just show up. If you're not, show up with 5 bucks and you've got a night of great entertainment teed up with you in mind. Sit back, relax, enjoy the game and leave the money in your wallet.

And that's just the beginning...

We've got a host of other activities coming up targeting young families as well. On Saturday night LBVC is hosting the "Young Guns Texas Hold 'Em Tournament." On Feb. 12 – Family Night at LBVC – we have reduced prices to ensure we are affordable to young families.

And in March, AAFES has agreed to begin 'Midnight Movies.' The collective goal of your base leadership and supporting activities like AAFES is to take care of our younger crowd, to make sure you all know how important you are to the mission and our future. And our commitment is not empty words – our commitment is presence, planning, and executing events you'd like to see at one of our base facilities.

If you have a better idea, please send it to me via e-mail me or Chief Lane (Find us on the global), or call either of us at Ext. 4700.

And if you forget this number, you can contact us with our phone number on your World's Finest Wingman Card (**WFWC**) ... we look forward to hearing from you!

I'm not done yet...there's still much, much more.

This Saturday evening we will kick off African American History Month at the Base Theater. I will sign a proclamation and then we will see and hear some of Aviano's most talented artists in a two-hour Gospel Concert/Celebration. I have spoken to many of those involved in planning this event – a lot of effort has gone into it, and they're awesome – so don't miss it! Contact Master Sgt Barnett at Ext. 7420 for tickets (just \$2.00 each) or information – 80 tickets are still available! Barb and I will be there, and look forward to seeing you all from 1900-2100, Saturday, Feb. 3 at the Base Theater!

There are several other African American History Month events planned throughout the month, but the main event – the Banquet – will take place on Feb. 24 at LBVC beginning at 1830 hours. The Honorable Ms. Ruby Butler DeMesme, a former Undersecretary of the Air Force for Installations and Reserve Affairs, will be our keynote speaker and honoree. I knew Ms. DeMesme from a past assignment on the Air Staff; believe me, it will be a night to remember! Tickets may be purchased through your First Sergeant (his/her number also on your **WFWC**.) Again, hope to see you all there!

I'm out of time and space...but wanted to bring you up to date on our priorities and upcoming events. Remember, we report at noon on Monday.

I'll close by adding that last weekend, we reset the DUI counter – only the third of this Fiscal Year. Don't forget – don't give in – don't ever let down – DUI leads to loss of life – that's why it's a crime. **DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE!**

Final reminder: On Saturday evening, take the Shuttle from Area Two to enjoy the **DDSBP at LBVC** – free for members! For now: adieu...until we meet right back here on the WF ranch at noon Monday – plan ahead, take care of one another, protect your precious life, be kind to your family and friends, and God Bless.



Airmen to see new combat medal in April

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

Since the Air Force started manning convoy operations in support of the war on terror, more Airmen have had an opportunity to put their rifle training to use in real-world scenarios.

Today, explosive ordnance disposal and security forces Airmen, along with those performing in-lieu-of taskings, have joined battlefield Airmen working “outside the wire” in Iraq and Afghanistan and are regularly involved in combat situations as part of their duty.

“We are a warfighting Air Force,” said Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. T. Michael Moseley. “Our Airmen are doing amazing things in combat operations every single day, both within their core competencies as Airmen, delivering those effects from the air and now on the surface as part of the joint fight.”

It is for those Airmen involved in combat operations, on the ground and in the air, that the Air Force has created the Air Force Combat Action Medal, said Gen. Roger A. Brady, deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel.

To develop criteria for the award and to get a better understanding of what Airmen were looking for in combat recognition, the Air Force consulted with combat-experienced Airmen.

“We gathered feedback from Airmen; active duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve members who’ve been in



combat,” said Maj. Randall Smith, chief of the Air Force uniforms and recognition branch. “Their feedback was critical in ensuring the recognition we developed met General Moseley’s requirements.”

The AFCAM will be officially unveiled sometime in April. Then, as part of the unveiling ceremony, some Airmen will be awarded the new medal. At that time, the Air Force will begin to process additional applications for the award.

In order for an Airman to wear the AFCAM, a narrative explanation of the Airman’s involvement in combat activities must be submitted by a person with first-hand knowledge of the incident. The application will be processed through the chain of command and eventually be approved or disapproved by the Commander of Air Force Forces.

The AFCAM is for Airmen that have directly participated in active combat, either in the air or on the ground, as part of their official duty. Airmen serving as a crew member on a C-130 providing

key support to Coalition forces or Airmen servicing as a convoy escort operation that takes fire, for instance, would be eligible to apply for the award.

“This is for people who are in combat as a part of their duty,” General Brady said. “If you are walking across the base at Balad and you are injured by a mortar, you will likely get the Purple Heart. You may even get a Bronze Star, depending on your performance in your duties. But that scenario would not lead to the award of the AFCAM.”

The AFCAM will be the highest-level Air Force individual award to not earn points under the Weighted Airmen Promotion System, said Major Smith.

“There was a strong consensus that this recognition should not be tied to promotion points, but should be tied to a meaning greater than that,” the major said.

Airman will wear the AFCAM on the mess dress uniform. The ribbon for the AFCAM can be worn on the blue or service dress uniform. These uniforms are usually worn for ceremonies or other duties where it is appropriate to highlight individual achievements. There will be no patch or badge equivalent for wear on the utility uniforms worn for daily duties and deployments; the emphasis in these cases is better placed on the mission and the team, above self.

Airmen can apply for the award to recognize participation in combat activities dating back as far as Sept. 11, 2001.

Graduation: The deadline to apply for the next Community College of the Air Force graduation is Feb. 9. Call Ext. 5330 for details.

Officer’s group collects shoes for local community

By Senior Airman Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Company Grade Officer’s Council needs Aviano members to step up. Actually, they just need shoes. Through Feb. 8 Aviano members can donate used, serviceable shoes to the CGOC’s shoe drive.

The collected shoes will be delivered to the Aviano Chapel for donation to various shelters in Aviano, Pordenone and Sacile.

The idea for a shoe drive came about when the CGOC was brainstorming for ways to give back to the local community.

“We wanted to do something that would extend into the community because there are not a lot of opportunities to do that here,” said CGOC member Capt. Michelle Nevatt, 31st Mission Support Squadron chief of customer support.

Captain Nevatt, who brought up the idea of a shoe drive after successfully hosting one at her last assignment, said giving back to the base’s host country isn’t always easy, which is why the CGOC wanted to do this.

“We find it very hard to reach outside the military community, where as stateside, there are so many things to do.”

The CGOC is hoping to collect more than 500 pairs of shoes, but will also accept any serviceable clothing items if someone wants to give but has no spare shoes.

CGOC president 2nd Lt. Eric Moore, 31st Mission Support Squadron section commander, said that the shoe drive will do more than put shoes on feet.

“For one, it puts Aviano Air Base in a more positive light and it shows we care and are willing to help – not just our own community, but others as well,” he said.

Donation boxes are located at each squadron or people can contact their unit first sergeant to donate shoes. Shoes should be in serviceable condition and can be summer or winter styles.

Donating, Captain Nevatt said, is a simple and quick way to demonstrate caring for the people outside the base.

“It’s an easy and fun way to do something really nice for the local community,” she said.

AF to implement DOS rollback

**By Staff Sgt.
C. Todd Lopez**
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – The Air Force has adjusted its force-shaping numbers in response to better-than-expected retention rates in fiscal year 2006.

In a message dated Jan. 26, officials said the Air Force must cut 3,090 Airmen by Sept. 30 in order to meet this year's force shaping goals.

The Air Force will use three personnel programs to help meet the goal. Those programs involve an extension of the limited active duty service commitment, or LADSC, waiver for technical and master sergeants to retire, a second wave of date-of-separation rollbacks, and a limited number of LADSC waivers for Airmen with 6 to 11 years of service in some career fields to voluntarily separate.

Last year, the Air Force offered LADSC waivers for some master and technical sergeants. The waivers allowed those Airmen to retire earlier than normal. But so far, only 524 Airmen had been approved for that program, short of the Air Force's goals. In response, the window to apply for the pro-

gram has been extended. Airmen may now apply for this program until April 30, but they must choose a retirement date that is no later than Sept. 1.

The Air Force will conduct a second round of DOS rollbacks. Airmen who have less than 14 years of service or more than 20 years of service, and who are currently serving on a control roster, have declined retainability for an assignment, have declined training or are serving suspended punishment pursuant to an Article 15, can be selected for the DOS rollback.

The DOS rollback program will give many Airmen a new separation date of Aug. 1. Airmen from all Air Force specialty codes can be affected by this program.

Finally, the Air Force is offering LADSC waivers to Airmen in certain career fields who have more than six but less than 11 years of service. A limited number of waivers will be granted, and Airmen who elect to participate in the program must choose a separation date of Sept. 29 or earlier.

For more information, visit the Air Force Personnel Center Web site at <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>.

DOD, VA announces plan for joint inpatient records

WASHINGTON – The Defense and Veterans Affairs departments have announced plans for a common inpatient electronic health-record system.

The two departments now have separate systems that require upgrade, officials said.

Both VA and DOD have been working independently on the enhancement and improvement of their respective inpatient electronic health record tools, officials said.

Despite obvious differences in mission, such as DOD's requirements to support its combat theaters, pediatric and obstetrical patients and VA's requirements to support domiciliary care, officials said, both agencies believe the similarities in clinical and business processes may make the adoption of a common inpatient electronic health record a viable option.

DOD and VA officials have made progress in their ability to share electronic health information as they move toward achieving interoperable electronic health records, officials said. Millions of records and data messages are regularly transferred electronically between the two organizations.

Adopting a joint electronic solution for the documentation of inpatient health information will facilitate the seamless transition of active duty servicemembers to veteran status, officials said. It also will make the inpatient health-care data on shared beneficiaries immediately accessible to both DOD and VA health-care providers.

Both agencies have agreed to conduct a study to examine their clinical processes and requirements and assess the benefits and effects on each department's timelines and costs.

NCO seminar: An NCO Professional Enhancement Seminar is Feb. 20-24 in Area One, Bldg. 220. To sign-up, call Ext. 4480.

Taxes, from page 1

have to write 'combat zone' on the cover."

A listing of eligible combat zones can be found at www.irs.gov.

Those who don't qualify for a tax extension can use one of the many free resources available to servicemembers.

"Military One Source has introduced TaxCut Basic Online by H & R Block – free to active duty, Guard, and Reserve servicemembers and their families," Captain Kindness said. "It's one-stop shopping for preparing and filing your federal and state income taxes, but in order to use the program, you must meet the eligibility criteria and be a registered member of militaryonesource.com."

Captain Kindness said the registration process is free and, after registering, people will be required to complete a survey assessing their tax needs. The program then selects the tax forms needed and automatically performs calculations.

"Some of the key advantages of using TaxCut Basic Online include: 24/7 assistance from Military OneSource tax consultants by phone and e-mail; and easy to transfer 2005 tax information if you used an H & R Block office, TaxCut Online, TaxCut desktop software or TurboTax software in 2005," Captain Kindness said. "But most importantly, the program will

guide you through the required forms and documentation and ask you tax relevant questions about issues like deployment and relocation."

The Internal Revenue Service also offers a free tax service called Free File for those who qualify.

"Free File allows taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$52,000 or less in 2006 to e-file their federal tax returns for free," Captain Kindness said. "That means nearly 70 percent of all taxpayers in the U.S. can use this free service."

Captain Kindness said before using Free File, people must review the tax software company's criteria to confirm eligibility for e-filing federal returns.

"Some companies offer free state tax return preparation and e-filing," he said. "But others may charge a fee for preparing state tax returns."

Additionally, each squadron will have tax representatives available to help people file their taxes.

"Even though taxes aren't due until April 15, you should develop and execute a plan now so you don't find yourself scrambling at the last minute," Captain Kindness said.

For more tax information, visit www.irs.gov or contact the legal office at Ext. 7843.

EOD staff sergeant receives Bronze Star

**By Staff Sgt.
Colleen Wieman**
31st Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

A 31st Civil Engineer Squadron member was awarded a Bronze Star for his actions while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sgt. Howie Loughran, Explosive Ordnance Disposal team leader, was presented the medal in December.

"Our squadron commander presented the medal to me, and our junior team members were awarded Army Commendation medals at the same time," he said. "We really wanted to have our decorations presented at the same time because we deployed and operated as a team. We wanted to be recognized as a team."

Sergeant Loughran added that Improvised Explosive Devices are the main threat to Coalition Forces and it was their team's responsibility to render IEDs safe. "We operated safely for six months," he said. "There's a lot to be said for that."

During his deployment,

his team executed more than 110 combat missions, diffused more than 80 IEDs and destroyed more than 50,000 pieces of ordnance. "Senior Airman Tony Cerone [31st CES EOD technician] was my team member for the entire deployment. He really had my back as we covered more than 31,000 square kilometers of Iraq," Sergeant Loughran said.

While deployed, Sergeant Loughran worked with a joint team that included the U.S. Army and sometimes the Iraqi army and police.

"We were the only four Air Force guys on the [Forward Operating Base,]" he said. "When we responded to calls, there were 16 Soldiers with us. We were like brothers. The Soldiers ensured our safety to and from the site and we ensured their safety on scene."

As EOD team leader, Sergeant Loughran was in charge of the entire group while at an incident location.

"I controlled and was responsible for everything, to include the Army Quick Response Force, Iraqi army, Iraqi police, and civilians, he said. "It was powerful, yet a



Staff Sgt. Howie Loughran, 31st CES EOD team leader, wears the bomb suit while deployed. The bomb suit protects EOD members when they are close to IEDs.

huge sense of responsibility. I had to factor in every possible thing that could happen including a safe area for disposal of hazardous items, movement of personnel, and the safety of infrastructure in the area. Prior to departing any scene, it was my responsibility to verify the area was safe for Coalition Forces and local nationals."

In one incident, Sergeant Loughran took charge when his team responded to a vehicle that was filled with IEDs and detonated in a nearby town.

"When we arrived at the

scene, I directed the team to use a robot to clear the incident site," he said. "With the robot, we discovered a smoking and damaged white phosphorous-filled 152mm projectile that had been ejected from the vehicle when the car exploded."

"In order to protect the local nationals and to preserve homes and businesses, I directed the quick response force to clear the streets of civilians," he said. "I had the Iraqi fire department control the flames of the projectile so we could move it to a safe place and detonate it. We acquired a metal drum large enough to hold the projectile, filled it with water, and secured it on the back of a truck."

Sergeant Loughran then put on a bomb suit and the fire department soaked him down with water. He quickly carried the round to the truck and placed it in the drum.

"We located an open field nearby and were able to detonate the hazardous projectile there without damage to personnel or infrastructure," he said.

Sergeant Loughran said he finds his job extremely rewarding. "When we are leaving an incident site and see the kids smile and wave, we know every day that we are making life a little bit safer for them," he said.



Photos courtesy of 31st Civil Engineer Squadron

While deployed, Staff Sgt. Howie Loughran, 31st Civil Engineer Squadron EOD team leader, shows different types of explosive devices to team members.

Bronze Star

The Bronze Star is awarded to servicemembers who have distinguished themselves by performing a heroic, meritorious achievement or service during ground combat in connection with military operations against an enemy. The medal is shaped like a five pointed star and in its center is a smaller raised star. The reverse of the medal has a raised center with rays extending to the five points of the star. Inscribed are the words "Heroic or Meritorious Achievement." The ribbon is red with a narrow blue center stripe flanked on either side by a narrow white stripe and a narrow white stripe at the outer edge.

(Information courtesy of the Air Force Personnel Center)

Mail room

With a new 24-hour schedule, the post office staff, volunteers are working harder than ever to get Aviano's mail delivered

There are more than 1,900 American Post Office zip codes around the world, creating a massive Department of Defense-managed system that allows U.S. government employees working overseas to mail items as if they were in the states.

In 2006, the APO mail system moved approximately 100,000 tons of mail, the equivalent of moving about 20,000 elephants or more than 1,000 fully loaded C-17 Globemaster IIIs. This was accomplished with 1,978 flight segments using 45 commercial air carriers that have con-

tracts with the DoD to transport APO mail.

Aviano's post office receives and processes on average about 55,000 packages per month. Between October and January, the number of packages increases to about 110,000 per month.

The DoD spent \$39 million on the APO system moving mail in and out of the European Command theater in 2006, said Tech. Sgt. Craig Thomas, 2nd Air Postal Squadron command postal manager, who has worked in the APO system since 1991.

Not only does DoD provide APO mail to the military, but also to U.S. citizens working in embassies and consulates overseas.

One of the most common questions people ask is, "Where does my mail go?"

A package mailed from Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, addressed for Bangor, Maine, for example, is sorted at the post office and taken to a mail truck and taken to the Frankfurt Aerial Mail Terminal. There, Air Force personnel sort through the mail and all mail going to New York City in a mail container that is weighed and a document is created to ensure the air taking the container is paid. The package is placed on a commercial airline and flown overseas.

Once the package arrives in New York – one of five gateway air mail centers – APO mail – it is processed through customs and then passed to the U.S. Postal Service, which continues the delivery.



Above: Senior Airman Tara Dossiema, 31st Communications Squadron postal clerk, left, checks an ID card as she helps a customer mail out a package Jan. 25.

Right: Senior Airman Amanda Turnbo, 31st CS postal clerk, sorts mail into Aviano's mail boxes. The post office is responsible for delivering up to 2,600 pieces of mail per day.



madness

the item, said Sergeant Thomas.

Another commonly asked question is “Why are commercial airliners used and not military aircraft?”

Sergeant Thomas said it’s cheaper and faster to move mail on commercial airliners. Military aircraft do not fly hard lines and are specifically flown for flexibility in ever-changing missions and operations tempo. Although there are a small number of military aircraft that transport APO mail, the majority, to include locations throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, are flown with commercial airliners, he said.

“APO mail is a tremendous morale booster,” said Lt. Col. Mitchell Maddox, 2nd AIRPS commander. “Dedicated servicemembers from all branches work day-in, day-out to ensure delivery, transport and receipt of the mail.” (*Information courtesy of USAFE News Service and Capt. Erin Dorrance, Kaiserslautern American*)

Stamp this

- Mailing of alcoholic beverages and alcohol-filled candy is prohibited by the U.S. Postal Service. The Military Postal Service is an extension of the USPS and all prohibitions, restrictions, and conditions that applied for USPS also apply to the MPS.
- Other prohibited items include: Handguns including pistols, revolvers and any other firearm or device; narcotics; fireworks; lottery tickets; flammables; poisons; ration items; fruits, vegetables, soil or live plants; and meat products such as salami, ham, bacon and all types of sausage and soup mixes containing meat. These items are prohibited because they could contain foreign pests or diseases which threaten U.S. agriculture.



Photos by Airman 1st Class Liliana Moreno

Post office volunteer Violeta Musseb-Gil organizes packages delivered to the post office.

Book speaker

The Aviano High School Book Club hosts teen author Chris Crutcher Tuesday. The author will speak at 8:15 a.m. at the high school and 1:15 p.m. at the middle school. Afterwards, he will sign books at the base library from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m.

Little Sprouts

Little Sprouts, a class designed to teach new and expecting parents about basic baby care and normal newborn appearance, is taught at 5:30 p.m. Monday and Feb. 12 at the Life Skills Support Center, Bldg. 108 in Area One.

For more information, or to sign up for classes, call the New Parent Support Program at Ext. 5667.

La Leche League

The next La Leche League meeting is at 10 a.m. Thursday in Area One, Bldg. 168, Room 88. The topic is "Why breastfeed?"

Pregnant women, moms, dads, babies and children are welcome to attend. For more

information, contact Gloria Thai at 348-242-5373 or lllaviano@yahoo.com.

ACES

The Aviano Civilian and Enlisted Spouse's Club hosts a general membership meeting at 6 p.m. Feb. 13 at the La Bella Vista Club. The theme of the meeting is "Spa Night" and members will be freshening up and wearing appropriate pajamas. Child care is available. For more information, call Ext. 5532.

History month

The following is a list of upcoming African American History Month events:

- The History of Gospel is at 7 p.m. Saturday in the base theater. For more information, e-mail Tech. Sgt. Yakeem Jones at yakeem.jones@aviano.af.mil.

- A Sweetheart Ball is at 7 p.m. Feb. 10 at the La Bella Vista Club. For more information, e-mail Tech. Sgt. Roy Thomas at roy.thomas@aviano.af.mil.

- A soul food tasting cook-

off is at 3 p.m. Feb. 17 at the Community Center. For more information, e-mail Tech. Sgt. Roy Thomas at roy.thomas@aviano.af.mil.

- The history month high school essay contest deadline is Feb. 15. For more information, e-mail Staff Sgt. Natasha Gory at natasha.gory@aviano.af.mil.

- An African American History Month banquet is at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 24 at the La Bella Vista Club. The guest speaker is the Honorable Ruby Butler DeMesme, former Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Tickets can be obtained through unit first sergeants. For more information, e-mail Master Sgt. Lorenzo Steele at lorenzo.steele@aviano.af.mil.

Special duty

The Airman and Family Readiness Flight seeks a highly-motivated active duty member to fill its superintendent position. Packages must be submitted to the flight chief in Area One, Bldg. 118, by Feb. 21. For more information and requirements, call Ext. 5407.

AECP program

The upcoming Airman Education and Commissioning Program deadline is March 1. Airmen interested in earning an undergraduate degree in a selected field and a commission should call the education center at Ext. 5330 for more information.

Program requirements may be found at <http://www.afoats.af.mil/AFROTC/EnlistedComm/AECP.asp>.

AFOSI

People interested in retraining as an Air Force Office of Special Investigations agent who meet the minimum eligibility requirements and have not obtained a bachelor's degree, can attend a mass testing at 2 p.m. Feb. 28 at the La Bella Vista Club. People who have bachelors degrees are eligible to apply, but are not required to attend the mass testing day.

Minimum eligibility re-

quirements include: People within 10 to 15 months of DEROS; 21 years or older; and a senior airman through master sergeant with less than 12 years of Total Active Federal Military Service. Second lieutenants through captains with less than 12 years TAFMS may also apply.

For more information, call Special Agent Cheri Turner at Ext. 6203 or Special Agent Ricky Gecewich at Ext. 6206.

OTS

People interested in applying for Air Force Officer Training School may visit the education center or log on to AirForce.com. To contact a recruiter directly, call (516) 794-3224 or e-mail supoa314@rs.af.mil.

Anger management

A men's anger management group meets from 9 to 10 a.m. Tuesdays. A women's anger management and self-esteem enhancement group meets from 9 to 10 a.m. Thursdays. Both classes are held in Area One, Bldg. 108, and are open to active duty and civilians. For more information, call Family Advocacy at Ext. 5667.

FTAC leader

The First Term Airman's Center seeks a highly motivated senior airman or staff sergeant to serve as a team leader for 120 days.

Applicants must be great role models in dress and appearance, and customs and courtesies. Senior airmen applicants must have graduated Airman Leadership School. For more information, call Ext. 5577.

Promotion cycle

The technical and master sergeant promotion testing cycle is scheduled through March 31. All eligible sergeants departing Aviano for a PCS or a TDY must test prior to departure.

All promotion testing is conducted in Area One, Bldg. 186, Room 4. For more information, call Kathrine Kosmala at Ext. 5465.

Reel Times

Today, 7 p.m. – "Freedom Writers" Rated PG-13 – A dedicated California teacher finds a way to unify her disadvantaged students and improve their grasp of academics. She encourages them to keep journals to document their violent and troubled lives. Starring: Hilary Swank, Imelda Staunton

Saturday – Theater is closed

Sunday, 7 p.m. – "The Holiday" Rated PG-13 – A woman named Iris is in love with a man who is about to marry another woman. Another woman named Amanda realizes the man she lives with has been unfaithful. The two women who have never met and live 6,000 miles apart, meet online and impulsively switch homes for the holiday. Iris moves to Amanda's Los Angeles home and Amanda moves to Iris's snow-covered English home. Shortly after arriving at their destinations, both women find the last thing either wants or expects: A new romance. Starring: Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet

Wednesday, 7 p.m. – "Freedom Writers" Rated PG-13

Thursday, 7 p.m. – "Turistas" Rated R – A group of young backpackers' vacation turns sour when a bus accident leaves them marooned in a remote Brazilian jungle that holds an ominous secret.

(Titles and times are courtesy of www.aafes.com, and are subject to change.)

Fly Bys

Carnevale events

The following is a list of Carnevale events in the local area:

- Cordenons hosts a Carnevale celebration at 2:30 p.m. Sunday.
- Santa Lucia di Prata hosts a Carnevale celebration at 2 p.m. Sunday.
- Aviano hosts a Carnevale celebration and parade at 2 p.m. Feb. 11. For more information, call 0434-66-0750.
- Pordenone hosts a Carnevale celebration at 2 p.m. Feb. 11.
- Sacile hosts a Carnevale celebration at 2:30 p.m. Feb. 17.
- Maniago hosts a Carnevale celebration at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 18.
- San Vito hosts a Carnevale celebration at 2 p.m. Feb. 18.
- Muggia, near Trieste, hosts a Carnevale celebration with costumes, but without masks at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 18.
- A Carnevale celebration for kids is at 1:30 p.m. Feb. 20 in Pordenone and at 2 p.m. Feb. 20 in Montebelluna.

Local events

- An exhibit displaying paintings of Venice in the 8th century is from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays through April 8 in Casa dei Carraresi, Treviso. For more information, visit www.venezia900.it.
- Call Ext. 7555 for more information.

Stop thief!

Avoiding crime while traveling

By Staff Sgt. Colleen Wieman
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Crime can happen anytime anywhere and becoming a victim can be a quick way to ruin an enjoyable trip.

"Around Aviano, we don't see that many pickpockets," said Special Agent Matt Brigham, Air Force Office of Special Investigations Det. 531. "There are more pickpockets at tourist destinations. They often operate in groups and could be somebody who doesn't fit the typical stereotype."

Agent Brigham said when going somewhere, always double-up or go with a group of people and blend in as much as possible. He recommended not wearing anything with American logos, such as college shirts.

"Another way to blend in and avoid a potential vehicle break-in is to use cover plates instead of AFI plates," Agent Brigham said. "The AFI plates say that you are an American and you may have something to take. Although the plates may not fit, when you leave the local area, Italians may think it's an Italian car and might leave the car alone."

Agent Brigham said people should park in well-lit areas or, preferably, a parking garage because the garage has security cameras. They also should not leave anything of value in the car.

While staying at a hotel, Agent Brigham advised not to disclose travel plans to hotel staff or ask for recommendations for activities in the area.

"You don't want the hotel staff to know if you are going to be out of your room for five hours," he said.

While at the hotel, he advised not to leave anything of value in the room, and for those who have to leave important documents, they should place them in the room safe.

"Occasionally we get notified of passports being stolen. You should make copies of your passport and IDs in case they get lost or sto-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Colleen Wieman

People should try to keep a close eye on their belongings while in crowds.

len," Agent Brigham said. "Keeping a copy on you and placing a copy in your suitcase also helps with recovering lost luggage."

When out at a restaurant or club, Agent Brigham said people should keep a keen eye on their belongings.

"I have noticed that a lot of ladies hang their purses off the back of their chair. To thieves, that purse is game," he said. "Any important documents you don't need, you should leave at home, and put your purse on the front of your chair so you can feel it's still there when you lean against it."

For men, Agent Brigham recommends moving wallets from the back pocket to the front.

Some countries may be a little more dangerous for travelers and Agent Brigham recommends visiting <http://www.travel.state.gov> before making a trip to a potentially hostile country.

"People can find specific information on whatever country they may be traveling to on that Web site," he said.

Travelers who are concerned about the potential threats posed to Americans in specific countries can always contact OSI and schedule a threat briefing. OSI can be reached at Ext. 7716.



Photo by Senior Airman Sarah Gregory

ITT will take a special Valentine's trip to **Verona**, home of Romeo and Juliet. During the trip, tourists can also visit Juliet's balcony.

Information, Tickets and Tours

Upcoming tours from the Information, Tickets and Tours office include:

- Feb. 10 – Munich and Dachau
- Feb. 17 – Cortina ski trip
- Feb. 17-19 – Fascinating Budapest
- Feb. 24 – Weapon factory and Museum in Brescia

ITT escorts ensure the group arrives and departs from destinations as sched-

uled and will do everything possible to make the trip safe and comfortable. Escorts also provide general information about the area.

Please note weather conditions and dress accordingly. The ITT staff recommends wearing comfortable shoes because most tours involve walking. Call Ext. 5072 or 5026 for more information.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Michael Dorus

Lining up

Mark Waters, 31st Services Squadron, lines up a shot during the Pool Shark Tournament at the Community Center Jan. 26. First place went to Reinaldo DeJesus, 31st Maintenance Squadron, and second place went to Dan Cloutier, 31st Services Squadron. The next game is at 7 p.m. today. Aviano hosts the USAFE championship Feb. 21-23. To sign up, call the Community Center at Ext. 5479.

Relax: The Area Two Fitness Center offers massage therapy. Call 348-364-0684 for an appointment.

Poker fever strikes Aviano

By Senior Airman Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The La Bella Vista Club's Texas Hold 'Em tournament has got people in the mood to shuffle up and deal. Through February, Aviano members have the opportunity to play in weekly games for cash prizes and a chance to compete in the U.S. Air Forces in Europe championship game.

Games are played every Saturday evening; club doors open at 6 p.m. for snacks and dealing begins at 7 p.m. The top three winners from each week are entered into the final base competition, which will be held Feb. 24. The winner of that game will represent Aviano at the USAFE championships at Sembach Air Base, Germany, held March 17.

La Bella Vista Club manager Christina Churchill said the response to the tournament has been amazing.

"Since the beginning of this USAFE tournament Jan. 6, we have had close to 300 people walk through our doors," she said. "It's been awesome. The tournament is a Project Cheer event geared toward Airmen, but everyone comes out."

Although the whole community is welcome to play in weekly games, people must be a club

member to participate in the base or USAFE championship games. Non-members pay an entertainment fee of \$10 to play.

For more information or to register to play, call the La Bella Vista Club at Ext. 4303.

Top poker hands

Royal flush – The best possible hand in five-card poker. Ace, King, Queen, Jack and 10, all of the same suit.

Straight flush – Any five-card sequence in the same suit

Four of a kind – All four cards of the same value

Full house – Three of a kind combined with a pair

Flush – Any five cards of the same suit, but not in sequence

Straight – Five cards in sequence, but not in the same suit

Three of a kind – Three cards of the same value

Two pair – Two separate pairs

Pair – Two cards of the same value

High card – If a poker hand contains none of the above combinations, it's valued by the highest card in it.

Fly Bys

Volksmarch

The Aviano Road Runners are participating in a Volksmarch at 8 a.m. Sunday. The group meets at the Bar Municipio in Roveredo and heads to Valenoncello. For more information, call Ext. 7692 or 7404.

Triathlon

The Community Center hosts a non-athlete triathlon at 7 p.m. Feb. 10. People can test their skills at darts, foosball and pool. A live band will also perform at 8 p.m.

For more information, call Ext. 5479 or e-mail diana.frayne@aviano.af.mil.

Bowling tourney

The Aviano Bowling Association hosts a Valentine's Day Scotch Doubles tournament at 6 p.m. Feb. 10 at the Aviano Bowling Center. Teams must consist of one man and one woman. The cost is \$25 per couple. There will be cash prizes given to the top finishing teams.

For more information, call Staff Sgt. Eric Hill at Ext. 4402 or the bowling center at Ext. 7487.

Slovenia adventure

Outdoor Recreation hosts a caving and horseback riding adventure in Slovenia. A minimum of eight people need to sign up for the trip to take place.

The trip costs €125 and includes transportation, a four-hour caving tour and a two-hour horseback riding lesson. For more information, or to sign up, call Ext. 8623.

Valentine golf

Go golfing with your sweetheart with the Alpine Golf Course's Valentine's Day special. Couples pay green fees for only one person on Feb. 14. Advance green fee members get the free use of a cart. Call Ext. 7386 for more information.

Sharing the road

Driving through the eyes of a motorcyclist

By Master Sgt. Darryl LeBouef
31st Fighter Wing
Motorcycle Safety
Course instructor

The automobile remains the king of the road, but other highway vehicles are taking their place in traffic.

The growing use of different types of transportation for commuting, business and recreation has led to a complex traffic mix.

In the local area and throughout Italy, motorcycles are a common mode of transportation. Traffic safety requires that motorists understand road hazards from the perspective of the motorcycle rider and how those riders will react to hazards.

Most drivers take for granted their automobiles ability to handle minor road hazards. Minor problems for

a four-wheeled vehicle can be major problems for two-wheeled motorcycles.

For motorcyclists, potholes, railroad tracks, oil slicks, puddles, road debris, ruts and other hazards may require sudden changes of lane position and direction. Motorist should be aware of how the motorcyclist reacts when encountering these hazards.

The texture of the road surface is critical to motorcyclists. Sand, mud and water will make starting and stopping difficult. Loose gravel, sand and mud force motorcyclists to ride with extreme caution to avoid skidding or sliding. Even wet paint stripes can increase the likelihood of a skid.

Motorcyclists typically watch the movements of vehicles ahead for road hazard clues. If possible, a motorcyclist will try to go around

“ The texture of the road surface is critical to motorcyclists ... even wet paint stripes can increase the likelihood of a skid. ”

an obstacle rather than over it and reduce their speed before reaching it.

Because of the motorcycle's size, motorcyclists often change their position within a lane as traffic conditions change. Most motorcyclists will typically choose a position in a lane to be seen, which means they ride in the left portion of the lane.

Experienced motorcyclists realize that the best position within a traffic lane is dictated by the situation.

Drivers should respect the motorcycle's vehicle space. Although there is often enough room, they should refrain from sharing a lane with a motorcyclist because the rider needs that space to maneuver for safety reasons.

Drivers who are following them should also keep a good distance in case a motorcyclist has to suddenly correct position or change direction.

Remember to “Drive safe – the life you save may be mine.”

Recognizing The World's Finest



UPCLOSE

and personal with Aviano's best

Staff Sgt. Sonora Vasquez, 31st Mission Support Squadron, was recently selected for the Chief's Choice Award. Sergeant Vasquez is Aviano's Personnel Reliability Program monitor. She has been in the Air Force for more than seven years and she sees herself “On the road to ‘Chiefdom’” in 10 years.

The Chiefs Choice Award is presented to top performers whose daily efforts distinguish them from their peers, but, because they sometimes work behind the scenes, they are often unrecognized.

Recipients are nominated and voted for by the Aviano Chiefs' Group.

Q: What do you like most about your job?

A: The networking and interaction with the base populous.

Q: Why did you enlist in the Air Force?

A: To serve my country and to travel.

Q: How do you recover from a hard day at work?

A: I relax at home or I spend time with friends.

Q: What does it take for you to have a good day at work?

A: A smiling face.

Q: What are the most important qualities and Airman should have and why?

A: Integrity, courage and dedication to duty.

Q: What advice did a mentor give to you that you can pass on to your Airmen?

A: Continue to lead.

Q: What advice do you have for young Airmen?

A: Get involved and become a well-rounded Airman so that one day you can set the example.